

CLAIMS:

1. A convertible vehicle comprising:

a vehicle body having a passage aperture defined at an upper edge of a longitudinally-extending side wall, wherein a guiding element is disposed on the vehicle body in or below the passage aperture,

a retractable folding top comprising a foldable frame including foldable, longitudinally-extending components disposed along longitudinal side edges of the foldable frame, the foldable, longitudinally-extending components being arranged and constructed to pass through the passage aperture during foldable top opening and closing operations,

a folding top storage compartment lid movably coupled to the vehicle body,

a cover plate movably coupled to the folding top storage compartment lid, the cover plate being arranged and constructed to move towards the passage aperture during the folding top opening operation, and

a safety catch coupled to the cover plate and being arranged and constructed to contact and then engage the guiding element during the folding top opening operation.

2. A convertible vehicle according to claim 1, wherein the cover plate is arranged and constructed to be moved into an engagement position in the area of the passage aperture by the safety catch during the folding top opening operation, the cover plate being further arranged and constructed to be moved away from the passage aperture during the folding top closing operation.

3. A convertible vehicle according to claim 2, wherein the cover plate is arranged and constructed to be:

movable together with the folding top storage compartment lid,

pivoted into an intermediate position during an initial movement phase, wherein the safety catch contacts the guiding element at the intermediate position, and

then extended along an arched, but substantially horizontal movement path in a subsequent movement phase, thereby securely engaging the safety catch with the guiding element.

4. A convertible vehicle according to claim 3, further comprising an actuation member arranged and constructed to move the cover plate into the intermediate position independent of the movement of the folding top storage compartment lid.

5. A convertible vehicle according to claim 3, wherein the safety catch comprises a pivotable catching arm that is arranged and constructed to contact and engage the guiding element.

6. A convertible vehicle according to claim 5, wherein the catching arm is arranged and constructed to be:

positioned so as to contact the guiding element during the initial movement phase of the folding top opening operation,

then pivoted relative to a mounting plane of the cover plate by forward movement of the folding top storage compartment lid, and

then firmly engaged with the guiding element in an engagement position when the folding top has been opened.

7. A convertible vehicle according to claim 6, wherein the catching arm is pivotably supported at a forward edge of the cover plate and is biased towards an initial position by a biasing element.

8. A convertible vehicle according to claim 7, wherein the biasing element is a spring.

9. A convertible vehicle according to claim 8, wherein the catching arm comprises a roller that is arranged and constructed to slidably contact and then engage the guiding element during the folding top opening operation.

10. A convertible vehicle according to claim 9, wherein the guiding element has a holding contour arranged and constructed to receive the roller.

11. A convertible vehicle according to claim 10, further comprising a retaining pin firmly coupling the guiding element to the vehicle body, the retaining pin having a contact base defined at a terminal, upper end of a contact base that is arranged and constructed to support a bearing plate defined within the safety catch.

12. A convertible vehicle according to claim 11, further comprising a hinge pivotably coupling the safety catch to an articulated, supporting part of the folding top storage compartment lid, the hinge being disposed at an opposite end from a supporting hinge disposed within the safety catch, which supporting hinge pivotably supports the catching arm.

13. A convertible vehicle according to claim 12, wherein the foldable frame supports a roof covering.

14. A convertible vehicle according to claim 1, wherein the safety catch comprises a pivotable catching arm that is arranged and constructed to contact and then securely engage the guiding element during the folding top opening operation.

15. A convertible vehicle according to claim 14, wherein the catching arm is arranged and constructed to be:

positioned so as to contact the guiding element during an initial phase of the folding top opening operation,

then pivoted relative to a mounting plane of the cover plate by forward movement of the folding top storage compartment lid, and

then firmly engaged with the guiding element in an engagement position when the folding top has been opened.

16. A convertible vehicle according to claim 14, wherein the catching arm is pivotably supported at a forward edge of the cover plate and is biased towards an initial position by a spring.

17. A convertible vehicle according to claim 14, wherein the catching arm comprises a roller that is arranged and constructed to slidably contact and then securely engage the guiding element during the folding top opening operation and the guiding element has a holding contour arranged and constructed to receive the roller.

18. A convertible vehicle according to claim 1, further comprising a retaining pin firmly coupling the guiding element to the vehicle body, the retaining pin having a contact base defined at a terminal, upper end of a contact base that is arranged and constructed to support a bearing plate defined within the safety catch.

19. A convertible vehicle according to claim 1, further comprising a hinge pivotably coupling the safety catch to an articulated, supporting part of the folding top storage compartment lid, the hinge being disposed at an opposite end from a supporting hinge disposed within the safety catch, which supporting hinge pivotably support a catching arm.

20. A convertible vehicle according to claim 1, wherein the foldable frame supports a roof covering.